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marqué du signe de la différence: l'animalité, l'animé. Dans la féminisation des beaux jeunes gens balzaciens, B.V. rend à la lecture et à la mise en mots leur part. On approuvera l'analyse de la référence *explicite* à la féminité, même si l'on regrette que le refus légitime d'attribuer cette sexualité à Balzac ou à son personnage aboutisse en fait à innocenter le discours de son ambiguïté sexuelle, c'est-à-dire à exorciser le jeu du désir dans le langage. Otant à la psychanalyse le problème du "corps morcelé," B.V. le rend au langage, à sa discrétion et à sa linéarité. La présentation de la totalité corporelle peut ruser avec la discontinuité et la succesion descriptives par une mise en relation des éléments ou une motivation du découpage . . . elle peut aussi en constituer le leurre du personnage: cette "narcissique" Louise de Chaulieu au corps énuméré et troué de manques. C'est ainsi du corps en mots au corps des mots, de la rhétorique de portrait — dont B.V. fait d'éclairantes citations — aux jeux de mots, calembours, pastiches, assonances qui font bouger le texte balzacien, une lecture excitante, qui invite à la discussion et oblige aux réévaluations. Parlant du roman, la "nature discursive des corps" est, au moins autant que l'autre, une évidence peu contestable.

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Charles Castella, *Structures romanesques et vision sociale chez Guy de Maupassant.* Lausanne: L'Age d'homme, 1972. THIS undistinguished book on Maupassant raises a number of interesting questions, not the least of which is what happened to Maupassant himself, once thought to be the greatest novelist of the nineteenth century, and of whom little has survived the *débâcle* of Naturalism. But the principal attraction of the work will surely be methodological, for Professor Castella has conceived his enterprise as a synthesis of the ideas of Lucien Goldmann, of the Lukács of the early *Theory of the Novel,* and of René Girard, who has contributed a preface to the present volume.

It is certain at any rate that, even today, when the need for close "structural" analysis of narrative texts is generally agreed upon, there are few enough models available for such analysis, and even fewer capable of accommodating narratives of full novelistic proportions. Hence the vogue, in the Anglo-American sphere, of Jamesian point-of-view theory (or of its revisions by Wayne Booth), as well as of the Frye-type myth analysis: the prestige of these two increasingly unsatisfactory "methods" may be accounted for by the scarcity of attention to narrative as such in the atmosphere of a New Critical overvaluation of texture and image. More recently, the three models alluded to above (not, of course, "structural" in the strict historical or philosophical sense of the word) have been made available to

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the English-language reader and have opened up new and suggestive avenues of study, even though one may have more reserves than Mr. Castella about their mutual compatibility.

I take it, however, that for all the intellectual gratitude which so many of us owe to the work and example of Lucien Goldmann, his solutions can no longer be thought of as theoretically definitive. I have tried to suggest elsewhere* that his fundamental doctrine of homology raises more problems than it solves; meanwhile, other critics, notably Stefan Zólkiewski, have shown the inadequacy of a concept of structure (as is well known, Goldmann ultimately associated himself with Piaget's concept of a "genetic structuralism") which fails to make a place for transformational operations. From a Marxist point of view, moreover, Goldmann's work may be faulted for methodological double-standard, which relies on a class analysis for the "feudal" period (here the principal exhibit would, of course, be *Le Dieu caché*), while the major statement on the modern period, *Pour une sociologie du roman,* eschews the concept of class conflict and of ideology for an insistence on the omnipresent mechanism of the market system and of exchange which is supposed to pattern all the cultural objects emerging from capitalism itself. This double standard has of course a revisionistic political intent (to downplay class struggle and class parties in favor of some more reformist view of eventual social change) of which Mr. Castella betrays little awareness; suffice it to say that the shift in methods tends to project a whole philosophy of history and to suggest a historical transformation in which a hitherto meaningful struggle between social groups is replaced by a far more mechanical mode of existence imposed by capitalism on all classes indifferently. This is, no doubt, what permits Mr. Castella to assimilate Goldmann's "Marxist" view of the nineteenth century novel to that of René Girard, which has, of course, quite a different philosophical basis and sees the key to the degradation of modern life in the disappearance of the hierarchical principle of feudalism and of the theocratic order (his newest work, *La Violence et le sacré,* is indeed a wideranging anthropological study of the relationship between violence and equality, an attempt to demonstrate the dependence of a stable and peaceful social order on a ritualistic acceptance of hierarchy).

As for early Lukaćs, an excellent Marxist critique of the *Theory of the Novel*** reminds us that for Marx capitalism is not only the source of dehumanisation, but also the source of progress as well; and that if it is useful, in the first perspective, to underscore, as the young Lukács does, the formal degeneration of the novel by comparison with the epic, it becomes indispensable to complete this account with the second perspective, in which the superiority of the later form, its incomparably greater freedom and

* *The Prison-House of Language* (Princeton, 1972), pp. 213-214.
** F. Feher, "Is the Novel Problematic?" *Telos,* No. 15 (Spring, 1973), pp. 47-74.

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complexity, is reaffirmed. This is, indeed, the constitutive ambiguity of Marxist historiography, and if one does not attempt to keep faith with it, one falls, either into a voluntaristic optimism not essentially distinct from the whig notion of progress, or, as in the present context, into some theological pessimism about the "fallen world". So Walter Benjamin's remark, "all cultural monuments are also documents in the history of barbarism," seems to me a better guideline to the methodological obligations such a view imposes, namely, to see the literary object in a double but simultaneous perspective in which its progressive and reactionary qualities emerge conjoined, in which its implicit critique of its own historical period is shown to be at one with a profound complicity with the dominant ideology, in which the permanent scandalousness of all previous culture imposes itself on the reader, beyond the facile solutions of some outright moral condemnation or acceptance and the comfortable illusion of a clear-cut ideological judgement. This is the light in which Mr. Castella's observations prove rather simplistic, as, for example, when he tries to suggest that *Une Vie* along with the later works, is critical of 19th century bourgeois culture, while Maupassant's first great worldly success, *Bel Ami,* must on the contrary be seen as an expression of the values of capitalism and thus as "degraded" in Lukács' sense (148).

Castella's judgements are all the more questionable, I would think, in that his critique of capitalism is effectuated in the name of some older feudal or aristocratic "authenticity" which not everyone will be prepared to grant. The hypothesis is, once again, Girard's, whose subtle analysis of the way in which the aristocracy was itself drawn into the humiliating master-slave dialectic of bourgeois consciousness and thus itself degraded and effaced Mr. Castella here presupposes. Yet here surely we are involved in the mirages and optical illusions of the dependence of historiography on the fiction of beginnings and endings, on the myth of *coupures* and absolute breaks, of paradigm-shifts and all the unwieldy apparatus of periodization, which by selecting any given moment as its point of departure — say, the French Revolution itself as the beginning of modern times — inevitably ends up suggesting that whatever preceded it is to be thought of as a kind of realm before the fall. It seems better to respect the ambivalence of history and to attempt to dispense with such structural nostalgia: feudal values may in many ways be considered as superior and more human than those of the bourgeoisie, the determining role played by immediate personal relationships in them may well serve as a standard against which to measure the depersonalization of life in the market system. But by the same token their institutionalized violence is also more personal and more brutal — not "alienation" in the middle-class sense, but torture, death at the stake, monstrous legal executions and the most sadistic physical injustices, of which the standard Enlightenment symbols — dungeon, Inquisition, *lettre de cachet* — offer useful reminders in the present context.

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The essential lesson which Mr. Castella has learned from the works of René Girard is however not this historical one, but rather the latter's idea of mediation and of triangular desire, as it is exposed in *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque* and succinctly recapitulated in Professor Girard's preface to the present volume: "Il n'y a pas de désir réellement spontané dans l'oeuvre romanesque de Maupassant. Les personnages empruntent leurs désirs à un modèle qui peut rester mythique et livresque mais qui peut aussi se transformer en un rival à la fois vénéré et honni, véritable pierre d'achoppement biblique" (i). In his seminal work on the novel, Girard diagnoses the debasement of modern existence in terms of a nostalgia for spontaneous desire of a properly romantic type (the *mensonge romantique* of his title), which in a mass egalitarian society leads to the establishment of a host of "mediators" from whom we learn the desires we do not ourselves have. It would follow that Professor Girard's model is then strictly applicable only to modern texts, situated after that essential "coupure" which is for him the fall of the *ancien régime* (it is true that in *La Violence et le sacré,* this "coupure" is located much earlier, at the very emergence of the city state itself; but Mr. Castella does not take the later work into consideration here).

I suppose that one's first reaction to Castella's use of the Girardean model is a certain disappointment at the coarsening and routine application of what remains a subtle and suggestive insight (compare, indeed, those remarkable pages of René Girard's own Preface, where, with a few expert improvisatory strokes, he transforms Mr. Castella's laborious findings into a whole brief luminous theory of the relationship, in Maupassant, between doubles and madness).

Yet the theoretical problems raised by *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque* transcend these questions of talent or of individual application. We are led, for instance, to ask ourselves whether the material revealed by this model is really to be thought of as a "structure" in the strict sense of the word (Girard himself, indeed, rejects the term: "les structures du structuralisme linguistique, faites d'écarts différentiels irréductibles, ne sont pas la même chose, de toute évidence, que les structures de la mediation" [iv]). His reflexions on this subject are worth studying in detail, for it becomes clear that he conceives of the play of mediations as a phenomenon quite distinct from the unconscious or non-conscious signifying articulations of Structuralism. I am tempted to characterize the material of a Girardean analysis as being rather that of the surface of social life and social relations itself, rather than the underlying terms and elements out of which the latter is constructed: something closer, in other words, to the object of study of anatomy than to that of, say, biochemistry. Professor Girard's method would thus be more closely related to a kind of phenomenology of interpersonal (and ultimately social) relationships than to the hermeneutic and archeological analyses of Structuralism: it aims, one would think, at the reestablishment of something like an adequate modern-day "surface

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psychology", in opposition to the hitherto more influential depth-psychological investigations. To say so is indeed to suggest that there is no a priori conflict between Girardean and structural methods, insofar as each governs a completely different object of research, but this should not be understood as implying that it would necessarily be an easy manner to devise some "unified field theory" to encompass both.

In the present context, however, what seems evident is that the play of Girardean mediations does not so much constitute the structure of the narrative, as rather that of the narrative's subject-matter, of social interaction itself: so that what Mr. Castella, following Goldmann, rather loosely terms narrative structure is in reality to be thought of as the *raw material* of narration, so that the word structure would be reserved for the forms into which the latter is moulded.

Such a restriction would go a long way, it seems to me, towards accounting for the weaknesses of Mr. Castella's treatment of Maupassant. What to think, indeed, of a book on the latter which ignores almost entirely the influence of Flaubert and which has nothing to say about the primacy in the later writer of that distinctive narrative mode which the earlier novelist invented almost out of whole cloth? But the fact is that Mr. Castella is interested in the psychology of mediation, and not at all in narrative mode, in the sense of an arrangement of events in time (the kind of thing Proust had in mind when he spoke of the "trottoir roulant" of the style of *L'Education sentimentale*). This is why the claims of Difference in the writing of literary history get short shrift here: Mr. Castella is not at all interested in what separates Balzac from Stendhal, or Proust or Flaubert from either and from each other, in what gives Maupassant himself his distinctive note (if he has one) in comparison with his master. Rather, he is concerned exclusively with what all these novelists have in common — with the phenomenon of mediated desire as their various novels gradually approximate it and articulate it ever more clearly and programmatically. Yet one cannot write literary history without passing on from Identity to Difference, without turning to the no less momentous question of what distinguishes these various treatments of a shared raw material from each other and makes of each a kind of alternative stylistic and narrative strategy and as it were an independent phenomenological and ideological position, as well as the reflexion of a distinct historical moment and situation. For even if we grant the notion that the great nineteenth century novels all in one way or another raise the problem of desire, and seek to disentangle it from commodity consumption on the one hand and simple outright ambition on the other, there remains, it seems to me, the issue of the development of the literary medium itself, of the gradual development and refinement of the narrative techniques which were to permit the artistic recording of such a phenomenon in the first place.

The reader will have no doubt guessed already that the reserves I have

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about Mr. Castella's achievement extend to the fulfillment of the promise of a sociological examination of Maupassant extended by his title *(Structures romanesques et vision sociale).* This examination is carried out, following Goldmann, through the establishment of homologies: "en ce qui concerne l'union de l'homme et de la femme, l'amour, tel qu'il vient d'être défini, se conçoit comme *valeur d'usage:* les amants tirent réciproquement jouissance des qualités complémentaires dont la nature les a dotés. En revanche, le mariage se présente comme *valeur d'échange:* les familles des époux concluent un marché aux termes duquel on additionne certains avantages quantitativement comparables" (79). No one, I think, will want to quarrel with this conclusion which is, however, terminology aside, a commonplace of all of the literature of the period itself. Mr. Castella goes on to observe that "Maupassant, quelles qu'aient pu être par ailleurs les tares de l'Ancien Régime, tient la grande noblesse d'autrefois dépositaire de certaines valeurs humaines authentiques" (80): and this optical illusion is indeed an interesting phenomenon in its own right, widespread throughout the nineteenth century (see Stendhal, for instance), which as an ideology and a historical myth deserves study in its own right. Mr. Castella does not however isolate it as a historical and ideological *symptom,* but rather takes it at face value as a valid statement about the past and as furnishing adequate criteria for measuring and judging the bourgeois present which the nineteenth century novelist has to deal with. Castella, in other words, remains *within* the limits of Maupassant's universe and deals with the writer *on his own terms:* it is not to be expected, therefore, that he could offer us useful judgements on the ideological weight and composition of that universe in its concrete historical context. But any criticism of this kind, made of a European intellectual product for an American academic public, should in conclusion stress what is positive about the sociological endeavor itself: even if Mr. Castella's attempt to correlate narrative structure and concrete social reality remains a relatively mechanical and idealistic one, his example is perhaps a good deal more wholesome for us, in our particular intellectual situation, than the interminable series of myth readings and image studies which pass for criticism of the novel in the American university at the present time. What is needed is more theory, and more history, not less!

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Jean Borie, *Le Tyran timide: Le naturalisme de la femme au XIXe siècle.* Paris: Klincksieck, Publications de l'Université d'Orléans, 1973. 160 p. EN 1971 paraissait aux Editions du Seuil le *Zola et les mythes ou de la nausée au salut* de Jean Borie, interprétation psychanalytique de l'oeuvre zolien et première

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